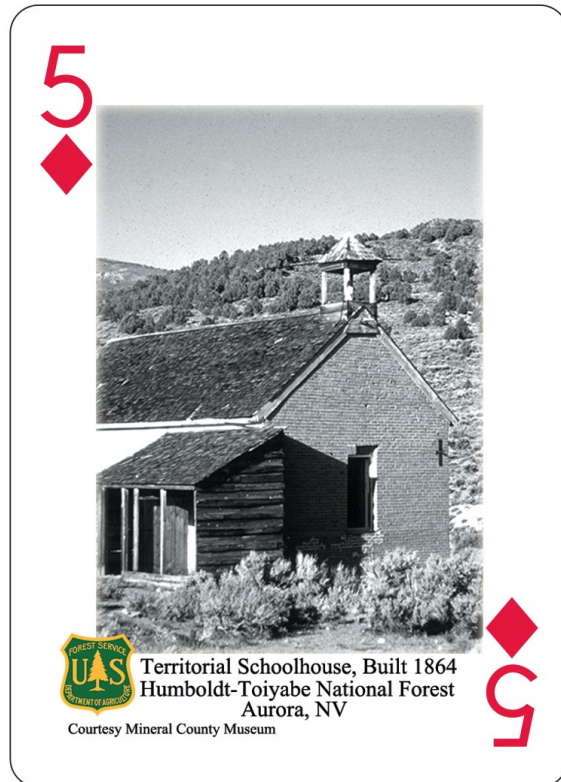


Aurora National Register District

Mineral County



Gold and silver deposits were first discovered in the Aurora area in August 1860. Within 2 months, prospectors had filed 350 claims. Aurora Township was established in 1861, and votes cast that year totaled 593. In March 1861, the California State Legislature made Aurora the county seat of Mono County, while Territorial Governor Nye made it Council District 1 under his authority. Later that year, the Nevada Legislature created Esmeralda County with Aurora as the county seat. Because the boundary dispute was not resolved by the next general election in 1863, voters cast ballots at one polling place for California officials and at another for Nevada candidates. Settled by the boundary survey of 1864, Aurora was found to be three miles inside the Nevada border.

Samuel Clemens, who later became known as Mark Twain, arrived in Aurora in 1862, but spent only four months there before leaving for Virginia City. The town continued to grow after Clemens departed, and reached its peak in the summer of 1863 with 2 daily newspapers, 2 stage lines, 17 quartz mills, a telegraph, and almost 800 houses—more than 60 of them made of brick. Early in 1864 Aurora was the second largest city on the east slope of the Sierra Mountains, surpassed only by Virginia City. But the ore bodies in the area turned out to be shallow at only 100 feet, and, in 1864, the town began a decline that never stopped. By 1870, the population had fallen to 160. Today the U.S. Forest Service protects the remains of this once-thriving town.

For more information on Aurora please visit:
<http://www.onlinenevada.org/articles/aurora>

